

VZCZCXRO0920  
RR RUEHROV  
DE RUEHROV #0024 0481154  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 171154Z FEB 06  
FM AMEMBASSY VATICAN  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0243  
INFO RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 0036  
RUEHROV/AMEMBASSY VATICAN 0271

UNCLAS VATICAN 000024

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT. FOR EB/TPP/ABT/BTT FOR TLERSTEN AND MKOCH, EUR/WE FOR  
JLARREA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [TBIO](#)

SUBJECT: FY 2006 FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY

REF: (A) STATE 233448, (B) 05 VAT 514, (C) 06 VAT 15

¶1. Post requests funding of \$10,000 for three individuals to visit the Vatican for targeted meetings with the Pontifical Council Cor Unum for Human and Christian Development and related Vatican officials to promote the usefulness of genetically modified food for the developing world. The Council is expected to begin work on an official Vatican document on world hunger later this year that could be crucial in swaying public and governmental opinion in Europe and the developing world on the subject. Post's substantial lobbying efforts on the "moral imperative of GMO food" and useful visits by Department and USAID officials last summer (ref b) have laid the groundwork for a useful contribution by the Council, but we need to push further on specific points of concern to the Holy See.

¶2. As per ref (b) and previous reporting from Post, we need to address Holy See concerns about the potential economic subjugation of developing-world farmers by multi-national corporations in the context of GMO food. It is also important for any program with the Vatican to include discussion of ongoing research on non-cash crops such as cassava and cowpeas. We would work with EB to develop a program that fit these topics into the broad framework of the moral issue we have framed for the Holy See.

¶3. Various elements within the Holy See have produced helpful documents and comments on GMO food - in fact, Post is currently preparing a summary of such material that could be useful for EB and embassies worldwide (septel). However, with the Vatican hierarchy divided on the issue, chances for a breakthrough proclamation in the near future by the pope are very slim. Most in the Vatican would prefer to avoid the issue. It is crucial, therefore, for us to take advantage of opportunities like Cor Unum's hunger document to prod the Holy See in the right direction, and help slowly build the case for these technologies.

¶4. The cost estimate covers transportation and per diem for visitors and miscellaneous expenses.

¶5. Post appreciates continued support from EB.

ROONEY